were cleared by the Indian customs within the validity period of Letter of Credit i.e. 22nd Jan. 1997. STC, thereafter, could not export the remaining quantity of sugar to Pakistan due to operational problems of non-availability of Railway rakes as well as non-extension of further validity of Letter of Credit by Trading Corporation of Pakistan, which expired on 22nd Jan, 1997.

व्यापार घाटा

4014. श्री गोविन्दराम मिर्धा: क्या वाणिज्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि चालू वर्ष के दौरान देश का व्यापार घाटा 5 बिलियन डॉलर के बिन्दु को छू गया है; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो इसके लिए उत्तरदायी कारक कौन-कौन से हैं?

वाणिज्य मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री बोल्ला बुल्ली रामैया): (क) जी जी सी आई एण्ड एस, कलकत्ता के आधार नवीनतम व्यापार आंकड़े (सांप्रेक्षित) अप्रैल-मार्च, 1996-97 (अनंतिम) की अवधि के लिए उपलब्ध हैं। इस सूचना के आधार पर, व्यापार घाटा 5.44 बिलियन अमरीकी डालर आंका गया है।

(ख) व्यापार घाटा निर्यात की तुलना में आयात अधिक होने से हुआ है। जहां आयात अर्थव्यवस्था की जरूरतों से जुड़ा है, तथापि वहां निर्यात अन्य बातों के साथ-साथ विभिन्न कारकों जैसे अंतर्राष्ट्रीय बाजार परिस्थितियों, टैरिफ एवं गैर-टैरिफ कठिनाईयों, घरेलू बुनियादी सुविधाओं, निर्यात क्षेत्र लागत और नीतिगत ढांचे आदि पर निर्भर करता है।

Tobacco Export from Andhra Pradesh

4015. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Council for Applied Economic Research submitted any report to enhance tobacco exports from Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any step in this regard;

(c) initiatives taken by Government to protect Andhra Pradesh farmers from any depression in tobacco export;

(d) whether it is a fact that no action has been taken to gain entry for tobacco export to USA market; and

(e) if so, reasons therefor?

THE MINSTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Tobacco Board has already taken measures to achieve the objectives of some of the specific recommendations made in the study report.

(c) Some of the steps taken/being taken to assist farmers and to enhance exports include:—

(i) Exploring possibilities of entering into long term supply contracts with the tobacco processing plants in Russia.

(ii) Persuading Russian authorities through bilateral discussions to fully utilise the funds allocated under the rupee repayment funds for purchase of tobacco from India.

(iii) Facilitating contracts between importers from Russai and other CIS countries with Indian tobacco manufacturers and exporters through visits of trade delegations.

(iv) Permitting stock and sales of tobacco in CIS countries and exports on consignment basis against payment in freely convertible currencies.

(v) Encouraging the Indian exporters to set up offices in CIS countries.

(vi) Opening of 3 additional auction platforms in Andhra Pradesh to facilitate the growers to sell their produce early.

(vii) Persuading the Indian Tobacco Association, Exporters, manufacturers and other Traders to participate, actively in the auctions to absorb the tobacco crop produced.

(viii) Negotiating with tobacco trade to declare a Minimum Guarantee Price (MGP) for tobacco purchase

which is higher than the Minimum Support Price (MSP) announced by the Government.

(ix) Assisting the tobacco trade in obtaining larger quantum of credit from the financial institutions for making purchases of tobacco.

(x) Participating in trade fairs & exhibitions abroad and arranging buyer-seller meet to enhance tobacco exports.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Import by STC

4016. SHRI CHIMANBHAI HARIBHAI SHUKLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of wheat, sugar and edible oil imported by STC during 1993 upto 31st December, 1996;

(b) the expenditure incurred on this so far;

(c) the names of countries from where these commodities have been imported; and

(d) the total quntities of wheat, sugar and edible oil imported and demanded by each State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) STC did not import wheat during 1993 and upto 31st Dec. 1996. The quantity of sugar and edible oil imported by STC during the period alongwith the expenditure incurred thereon is given below:—

Edible Oil

(Rs. crores)

Year	*Quantity*	*Value*
1993	0.42 Lakh MTs	50.44
1994	1.07 "	188.43
1995	1.49 "	338.61
1996	2.03 "	401.65 (Approx.)
Sugar		
1993	Nil	Nil
1994	4.71 (Approx)	585.52
1995	0.42 (")	66.00
1996	Nil	Nil

(c) STC imported edible oil from Malaysia and Indonesia, Sugar was imported by STC from Thailand, Netherland, U.K., Poland, France, USA and Brazil.

(d) Details of the imported quantities of sugar and edible oil by STC are givem in reply to part (a). However, information relating to the demand by each State for these commodities is being collected and would be laid on the Table of the House.

Loss of Legal Case by STC

4017. SHRI NAGMANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether STC contested and lost a legal case in London Court during December, 1996;

(b) whether STCs Solicitors emphasised the need to send STC's witnesses to appear in Court;

(c) whether one of the reasons cited by